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The MUSICAL AMATEUR

HINTS TO AMATEUR ORGANISTS.



O many requests have been made for a few words to organists that I have concluded to address myself, without further delay, to this class of amateur musicians. I confess feeling a little puzzled at the outset, so many things that would properly have been said in the course of such an article having been already embodied in my article on "Church Choirs." I may, however, be able to say a few words on "registration" (the use and combinations of the various stops), on the proper music for the instrument, and on the best mode of practice.

In treating of this instrument I shall confine myself to the pipe organ, the cheaper make-shift known as the "reed organ" being scarcely worth notice. To speak of the various grades and sizes of pipe organs, from the small one with a single set of manuals (commonly spoken of as "one row of keys"), one octave of pedals, and eight or ten stops, to the gigantic instrument of three, or even four, sets of manuals, two octaves and a third of pedals, and eighty or more stops, would stretch this article to unwieldy proportions; and such considerations belong more properly to organ planning and building than to organ playing, especially such playing as is most likely to be done by amateurs. This branch of the subject, large enough in itself, would also be greatly lengthened by necessary remarks on the peculiarities of individual builders, each of whom has certain pet stops which he insists upon introducing upon all possible occasions, no matter how inappropriately, and by still more remarks as to the differences in quality of even the stops of the same denomination as made by the different builders. To instruct my readers so that they could properly and understandingly cope with the injudicious prejudices of these builders would require an extensive treatise. But you are safe in deciding that a builder whose open diapasons are reedy is one who has made a serious mistake in the fundamental stop of the instrument. You will also be safe in setting your face sternly against "divided" stops; I mean by that, an arrangement which compels the drawing out of two knobs for the bringing on of one complete set of pipes. You will frequently see in an organ two knobs, labelled respectively "stop diapason bass" and "stop diapason treble," or "oboe" and "bassoon" (the "bassoon" being the bass of the "oboe," sometimes spelled "hautboy"). The builder has done this for one of two reasons: he has either desired to make his organ seem larger than it is, by increasing the number of his draw-stop knobs, or he has been either too ignorant or too lazy to connect his stop diapason bass with the other soft stops by channelling his sound-board in the proper manner; for it is sometimes necessary in a small and cheap organ to make the lower octave or octave and a half of stop diapason pipes do duty for all the soft flue stops. This should, however, always be done by channelling the sound-board, as I have above intimated, and not by giving to these few notes a special draw-stop knob.

It is very seldom that a pupil begins his studies on the organ itself; the fingers have usually had some previous training on the piano. This is not a bad preparation, in spite of the different touch needed for organ and piano (organ keys being pressed, while piano keys are struck), for the *feel* of the two instruments is so different that the fingers unconsciously adapt themselves to the change of attack. The hitherto piano-playing pupil has therefore only to accustom his fingers to the change of touch, and to learn to hold down each key as long as it should sound and no longer, this latter being a point sadly neglected by most piano players. On the organ it is one of vital importance, for on this instrument each tone will sound just as long as the key is held down, and no longer. These two matters (with the addition of some change of fingering necessary for obtaining a legato effect in changing successions of

chords) are all the new things that the fingers have to study; but to them must be added the study and practice of the pedals (played with the feet) and of registration.

It will be best, at first, to let your teacher draw out for you such stops as he wishes you to use, while you bend your whole attention to the training of your fingers in the points mentioned above. When you have fully conquered this, the first step, you may begin your practice on the pedals; and before entering on this branch I have again a few words to say on the building side of the question. I must first state that what I am about to say does not refer to any instrument with less than two octaves of pedals, and I might here add that no pupil should ever study on an instrument with less.

There are, unfortunately, many builders who, either through carelessness or lack of opportunity, have never studied the minutiae of their business, the consequences being sometimes very embarrassing to the organist. One of the points on which they are most likely to betray their ignorance is in the position of the pedals as related to the keys. When properly placed, the middle C of the pedals is directly under the middle C of the manuals, and just far enough under the key-boards to bring the outer end of the sharps under the outer end of the sharps on the great organ manual. But as you are always likely to come across organs in which these rules (especially the former) have not been observed, and as the playing of the pedals is the most difficult part of an organist's performance, I wish to give you a rule which will save you much trouble in grappling with a strange organ. You must remember that the pedals have to be played atmost entirely without assistance from your eyes; all your jumps and long intervals must be risked by "going for" the place where your foot is accustomed to find the note you want. If you will always accustom yourself to sitting on the organ-bench in such a position that your left foot is naturally over the middle C of the pedals, and your right over the E one third above, you will greatly increase your chances of getting the right notes. A shift of a few inches one way or the other will not embarrass you on the key-board—there your eyes help you—and it may greatly facilitate your work on the pedals.

You will study the pedals alone at first, using your eyes, of course, to guide your feet. I will not attempt to give you here a series of exercises for your study. In every good organ school you will find one, properly graded, and marked for left and right foot, or for toe and heel, as the case may warrant. Both ways of playing (with alternate feet, or with the toe and heel of the same foot) must be practised. The toe and heel method helps you out of awkward positions where the feet might otherwise get into a hopeless tangle, and it also enables you to play something approaching a legato with one foot while the other is occupied with the swell pedal. But useful as toe and heel playing is, you must not (as some organists do) depend upon it entirely. If you do you will soon reach the very contracted limit of your possibilities. Really good pedal playing can only be done with both feet.

After you have got your feet so far advanced that you can play most of your pedal exercises without the help of your eyes, you may begin to put hands and feet together, and a nice time you will have. Your feet *will* go with your left hand, or, if you pay very particular attention to them, your left hand will go with your feet. You would better, at first, content yourself with playing very simple, slowly-changing and closely-connected chords with your hands, while your feet play not very difficult passages. You will also find it a good plan to couple your pedals to your key-board, so that you can discover what your feet are about without peering down into the lower regions. Then you may try long-held notes with the feet while the hands roam freely over the manuals. Afterward you will commence the study of general independence, hands and feet going each on their own separate way; and for some little time you must expect those ways to be much more devious than called for by the composer you may be studying. The

affection between the left hand and the feet I never understood, though, like all organ students, I suffered much from it during the earlier days of my practice; but it is a solid fact.

When your hands and feet are pretty well advanced you may begin to study registration. This is the particular branch of organ playing in which the organist (who is not an extemporizer) has the greatest field for proving his originality. It is impossible for me to give here more than the most general hints. With the plan of some one organ before me I could give you the (probable) best combinations on that particular instrument, though even that would be sometimes doubtful. Two stops bearing the same name, but from different builders, often differ so widely in effect that a combination which with one will be very effective may easily with the other be unpleasant. Experiment will tell you which are the best combinations on your individual organ quicker and better than I can.

A word or two about the pitch of certain stops. You will find in all organs stops of (to use the builders' phrasing) 16-foot, 8-foot, 4-foot, and 2-foot tone. This nomenclature refers really to the presumed length of the longest pipe in the stop, and is generally engraved on the knob with the name of the stop. The 16-foot stops sound an octave lower than the music is written (this is stating it very roughly, but is, I think, sufficiently comprehensible), the 8-foot stops give the actual pitch, the 4-foot stops and 2-foot stops give respectively one and two octaves higher than is written. The 8-foot stops are necessarily the most numerous; with these you achieve most of your different tone-colors. The most important of these is your open diapason; this is the stop which gives the color to your full organ. If your diapasons are good your full organ will be round, rich, and full, unless (as in the case of one organ that I know) overpowered by screaming 4-foot and 2-foot stops; if they are bad no individual beauty in fancy stops can compensate for their failure. While mentioning the open diapason it might be well to clear up a misunderstanding which has troubled more than one organist. In this country and in England the open diapason is so called, and the chief of the 4-foot stops is named the principal. But in German organs the open diapason is called the principal, and the 4-foot stop, which we call the principal, is there named the octave. A glance at the "foot" marks on the knobs will tell you which nomenclature you have encountered. If your principal is marked "4-foot," then you have hold of an organ in which the open diapason appears under its own name; but if it is marked "8-foot," then that is your open diapason, German style, and you must find your 4-foot stop under the title of octave.

The diapasons and most of the flue-pipes are good steady workers; but you must use your reed stops (trumpet, oboe, etc.) for special effects only, or to swell the power of your full organ.

There are also some stops which can only be used with full organ; these are the mixtures, which appear under the titles of sesquialtera, mixture, and (sometimes) cornet. These mixtures are queer stops; each note that you touch on the organ sounds in them three, four, or five notes (harmonic to the note pressed), according as the mixture is called three, four, or five rank. These must *never* be used save with full organ, their effect then being only to intensify the natural over-tones of the notes played; for a full understanding of which you must consult Helmholtz.

There is another stop, called the twelfth, which must never be used without the 2-foot stop (usually called the fifteenth). There are also one or two stops which are purely solo stops, and should not be used in the full organ. The most frequent of these are the *cremona* and the *vox humana*. If you must use the tremulant, which I hate and despise, use it only with soft stops, and, as much as possible, for melody only. The couplers explain themselves.

A word about the use of the swell. Do not, as I have seen and heard organists do, keep the swell pedal see-sawing up and down; you produce, in this manner,

a "yawning" effect, which is horrible. When you leave the instrument put in all the stops (this keeps the dust out of the wind-box), and open your swell to its full extent. If you leave the swell shut, and a change of temperature occurs, all the rest of your organ, being exposed to this change, will sharpen or flatten; but your swell, being tightly shut up, will stay as it was, and then your instrument is all out of tune with itself.

I have but small space in which to speak of the music you should use, but I must say a few words. Remember that the organ is, before all things, the instrument of majesty; "pretty" and "sweet" effects, although within its power, are opposed to its character. The modern sickly-sweet school of French organ writers—Lefébure, Wély, Battiste, and all that set—should be eschewed. Bach, Handel, Mendelssohn, and the modern Germans (like Thiele) have treated the instrument properly, and before you have reached the heights of these writers, who are difficult as well as grand, there are smaller works of equally good organ schools. Fantasias, marches, overtures are all forbidden to the organ, although so many players use them; you may almost safely conclude that what you see down on a concert programme for an organ solo is a work to be shunned. In Rink's "Organ School" are many good things for the instrument, and if you diligently practise that work to the end you will be fitted to grapple with the highest class of pure organ compositions.

C. F.



READFUL is the competition for band-players going on here now. Gilmore, Neuendorff, Downing, and a host of other conductors are struggling and pulling against each other for the better class of musicians. All have bands at Rockaway, Coney Island, or some such summer resort, and all want to have the best. As a natural consequence musicians' stock is up, and the free and independent tone adopted by these worthy gentlemen when negotiating for an engagement is in amusing contrast to their behavior in dull seasons. If matters go on in this way New York will come to be looked upon as the orchestra-player's paradise.

I UNDERSTAND that a really fine French grand opera company will come here next season, and that we shall then see many operas now either forgotten or unknown among us. Prominent in the list of works to be performed stands the "Charles VI." of Halévy, long considered by musicians to be that master's best work. There are also rumors of the production of "Psyche," by Ambrose Thomas, an opera replete with beauties. This is one of his earlier writings, and when first produced had little or no success; but since the interest created by his "Hamlet" and "Mignon," it has been reproduced and received with acclamations.

AN English paper, speaking of a promised performance of the "Irene" of Gounod, remarks that it is one of that master's latest operas. The fact is that it is quite an early work, antedating "Faust" and "Romeo and Juliet," and belonging to about the period of his "Reine de Saba."

THEODORE THOMAS'S future movements are taking shape. He will next winter reorganize his magnificent orchestra, and give, as of old, concerts in New York and in cities near about. At least so the musicians say; and they, being deeply interested in any such movement, are likely to know.

It is said that Dr. Damrosch has his Oratorio Society already at work on the "Romeo and Juliet" symphony of Berlioz. This is very good, if true; but it might be better. We have had the "Romeo and Juliet" from Mr. Thomas. Why does not Dr. Damrosch give us the "Fantasie on the Tempest," or the immense "Requiem Mass" of this composer, and

thus enable us to become acquainted with still more of his works?

THE five piano recitals of Franz Rummel, just concluded, have shown that really great artist in his best and worst points. His best points are a never-failing energy, an intense fire and passion, and a wonderful memory; his worst are an occasional hardness of attack, and an over-velocity which frequently degenerates into uncleanness and confusion. The programmes of his recitals embraced works of most of the great composers from Bach and Handel down to the present time, and introduced some works new to our public here. The recitals were attended by an audience which steadily increased with every performance, and were listened to with never-flagging attention, in spite of their length and their severely classic character.

AS I write, Mr. Joseffy's two piano recitals are near at hand. Those who mistakenly insist upon making comparisons between this artist and Mr. Rummel have now an excellent opportunity for the exercise of their favorite amusement. It is useless to tell these well-meaning but misguided auditors that a comparison between two artists whose styles and whose aims are so different is impossible, because they will not believe it; but it is nevertheless true.

OUR operatic song birds have flown—all save Campanini, who has stayed behind to add to his operatic laurels fresh ones gathered in the concert-room. His magnificent work in the "Siegfried" and "Götterdämmerung" selections has been mentioned, and now he has been setting "The Hub" wild by his singing in the "Stabat Mater." The usually calm and judicial Bostonians, startled out of their cold propriety, applauded and shouted like any excitable Italian audience. Campanini may not know it, but this is the greatest triumph of his life.

CARYL FLORIO.

THE FLORIO CONCERT.

AT Chickering Hall on Thursday evening, April 29th, Caryl Florio gave his first concert "for the production of his own works." Mr. Florio has hitherto been best known as an accompanist, and it is a fact, better known to solo artists than to the general concert-going public, that there is no accompanist in this city who is more sympathetic or more successful in helping singers over the rough places in their work. Several of Mr. Florio's compositions, especially those for voices, have become great favorites with the audiences who have attended in late years the Vocal Society concerts, for example, "Farewell to May," a five-part madrigal in the strict old English style, and "The winds are all hushed," a four-part serenade in a rather freer form. The latter has hitherto only been performed at concerts given by the Brainerd and Weber Quartettes.

The Florio entertainment opened with an "Allegro de Concert" for saxophone quartette. This having been heard before, at Gilmore's concerts and at some of the Grand Opera House Sunday evening concerts, calls for no special criticism. The serenade, "The winds are all hushed," was well done; this composition is strong and well worked for voices, grateful to the singers, and effective for the hearers. "St. Agnes," for soprano solo, with 'cello and organ accompaniment, is a very characteristic setting of Tennyson's words. Miss Brainerd did full justice to the vocal part, as did Mr. Werner to the 'cello obligato. They were both slightly overborne by the organ, which was at times too prominent for them.

The string quartette, No. 2, seemed to suffer from insufficient rehearsal, the last movement—a well-worked fugue—not being at all clear on a first hearing. It is unfortunate that the theme of the fugue reminds a quartette player of the theme of the last movement of Schumann's Quartette, No. 1, because it was the only phrase in the whole concert that even suggested a reminiscence of any other composer.

The glee, "On this fair day," showed Mr. Florio's ability to think back 250 years and write as he would have done had he been a contemporary of Wilbye or Weelkes. The rendering was more perfect than that of the serenade. Perhaps the most striking vocal effort of the evening was Mrs. Lasar-Studwell's rendering of "The Siren's Charm." The composition is unusually

original, and the combination of voice, clarinet, and 'cello is exceedingly happy. While in doubt whether Mrs. Studwell was imitating Mr. Lefebvre's clarinet-tone or Mr. Lefebvre was imitating Mrs. Studwell's soprano-tone, I was forcibly reminded of Berlioz's graphic comparison of the clarinet to the female voice, in his work on orchestration and instrumentation. The "Lullaby," sung by Miss Beebe, I had heard at an English glee club concert, and need only say that it improves on acquaintance.

The climax of the concert was the quartette for saxophones and piano. It should have been advertised as a concerto for piano with saxophone quartette accompaniment. The composition is in large form and fully worked out, and it is but justice to Mr. Florio to say that he is the first to write a composition for this combination of instruments. The themes are original and strong, and in their breadth remind one of some of Rubinstein's largest conceptions. Though the quartette parts require much of the players, they cannot be compared for difficulty with the piano part, which bristles with digital horrors.

The performance was a decided triumph. Mr. Florio never played such passages in such perfection before. He developed a delicacy and crispness of touch combined with a power and a brio that took even his warmest admirers by surprise.

On the whole the concert was most successful, both as regards the composer and the performers. Mr. Florio is to be congratulated on the result, and it is to be hoped that he will in due season give the second concert of his series.

D. E. R.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SUPPLEMENT.

PLATE XLIX. is a design for a tile. The ground is a mossy bank, which should be painted brownish green and the rushes a rich dark green; the water-lily leaves a bluish green. The water in the foreground should be a deep blue, with the reflection of the trees above it, and that in the middle distance should be lighter, with bright dashes of white. The sky is a tolerably dark blue. Paint the trunks of the trees dark greenish brown, to bring out the figures in relief. The bank at the back of the youth is clay, and should be reddish brown, with occasional tufts of green. The slope of the bank should be a varied green, shaded from the reddish brown of the edge. The trees in the distance should be grayish green, and only lightly touched. The girl is a blonde and the youth a brunette. The drapery of the former should be lemon yellow, shaded with russet brown; the handkerchief on her head, very light reddish purple. The youth's tunic should be bright crimson, with plenty of shadow, only a little of the bright color showing, and his mantle rich blue. His hair is bluish black, and his flesh should be almost wholly in shadow. The light would strike only on the shoulder and hip. The girl's head is in shadow, but her neck is in strong light, as are also her arms. The foot is in shadow.

Plates L. and LI. are designs for embroidery, working size. The former is intended for the border of a table-cloth—primroses, wood-anemones, and ivy—to be worked in crewels on cloth or serge; the flowers may be worked in silk. The design can be enlarged if desired. Chocolate brown will be a good color for the foundation; three shades of green may be used, the leaves of the ivy being the darkest, while the stalks and sepals of the primrose are the lightest, and the primrose and anemone leaves are of the intermediate tint; a greenish-yellow may be used for the ivy and anemone stems, the latter being a trifle the lighter in tone; the primroses are of a very pale yellow with darker yellow centres, the anemones a pinkish-white, with pale brown centres and light yellowish stamens; the mid-veins, where shown, may be of a very pale yellow.

Plate LI. is a design for a mantelpiece border—oranges and blossoms—which may be continued to the required size, the basket to come in the centre. It is to be worked on cloth, serge, or velvet, in silk or crewel according to taste. A rich brown will make a good foundation; the fruit and the ribbon should be worked in deep orange, which may also be used for the stamens; the basket may be of a rather lighter yellow, relieved by creamy white for the bands, with very light brown for the vertical and short diagonal markings; the blossoms and buds should be creamy white, the leaves and arabesques a light olive green, and the